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2020 Social Media Managers and Mental Health

University Relations

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SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS AND MENTAL HEALTH

April 2020



BACKGROUND

When compared to more traditional fields, social media is a relatively young and evolving field. Social media managers in colleges/universities have played a critical role in conveying information about COVID-19 and its impact on colleges/universities. We wanted to test the hypothesis that social media managers' mental health has been particularly impacted by this turn of events.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An online survey was posted on two closed social media sites:

- Higher Ed Social closed Facebook group
- Higher Ed Social Slack channel



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In most colleges/universities, those tasked with handling social media do not do it exclusively. Rather, that is just a portion of their job. Also, in most cases, they are solely responsible for it, and that job, alone, encompasses a wide variety of activities. Those responsibilities common to most social media managers are:

- Developing goals and strategies for social media on campus
- Gathering and analyzing data
- Posting content to popular social media channels
- Social listening and/or engagement

About half of those who responded to the survey have been in a social media role in a university setting between one and less than five years and one-third have been in the industry for at least five years.

The part of their job social media managers enjoy most – far more than any other – is developing content. Other well-liked aspects of their job include working with others, engaging with comments/mentions, working in an ever-changing environment and analyzing data.

However, a social media manager's day-to-day responsibilities often cause stress and anxiety as well. The top three challenges social media managers face, regardless of their years of experience, are a) receiving partial or late information; b) having a job that entails working 24/7/365; and c) feeling that others lack knowledge about their role.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Receiving negative comments and reactions to posts is a lesser challenge, overall, but it is interesting to note that those who are newer in the industry are less likely to be negatively impacted by these types of comments.

Having to deal with crisis situations elevates the mental pressures social media managers already experience. While they are often the front line of communications in those scenarios, most do not have a seat on the crisis communications team. Instead, they receive second-hand information or learn news after it's already been otherwise announced.

Dealing with COVID-19 has made social media managers' jobs particularly challenging for a number of reasons:

- Dealing with an increased number of negative posts
- Having to develop new content for an unprecedented event
- Facing more scrutiny regarding social media posts
- Needing many levels of review/approval
- Having a faster pace, higher stakes, more pressure and expectations
- Not being able to provide immediate answers to questions
- Increasing amount of information and speed at which it's posted
- Dealing with leaderships' lack of understanding about social media
- Lacking a strategy and/or prioritization of information



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These challenges also impact their mental well-being. When asked to rank their mental health on a 0-10 scale (0=poor mental health; 10=excellent mental health), social media managers indicated their mental health is adversely impacted in crisis situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u><1 year</u>	<u>1 to <5 yrs.</u>	<u>5 or more years</u>
Typical day:	6.35	6.29	6.31	6.45
In a crisis:	4.52	4.42	4.41	4.74
COVID-19 :	4.63	4.67	4.47	4.88

Generally speaking, some supervisors are fairly diligent in taking the pulse of their social media manager, but others typically show little to no interest. Most have shown an increased level of concern about their social media manager's mental health during the pandemic. However, despite their manager's good intentions, only about half the social media managers have had the support and/or resources they feel they need to ensure their emotional well-being.

Their suggestions for how supervisors can lend more support during stressful and anxiety-filled times include:

- Showing more support by advocating on the social media manager's behalf
- Trusting that social media managers can do their job without being micromanaged
- Providing more structure or resources so social media managers don't have to work around-the-clock



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social media managers' advice for their cohorts who find their job stressful include:

- a) Take a break and disconnect. Realize that people do not live and die by your posts. Set boundaries and do the best job you can within an established time frame.
- b) Seek assistance. Talk to your managers and colleagues and/or get professional assistance. Expressing your feelings to others will help you to realize that you do not need to go through trying times alone.
- c) Find allies. Join networking groups where you can talk and share your similar experiences, feelings, and frustrations and identify helpful solutions.
- d) Find an outlet. Identify activities and interests that are personally fulfilling to you and engage in them on a regular basis.
- e) Don't personalize negative comments. Remember that you are the messenger and not the message. Realize people use social media to express their own frustrations, not with you, but with the situation at hand.

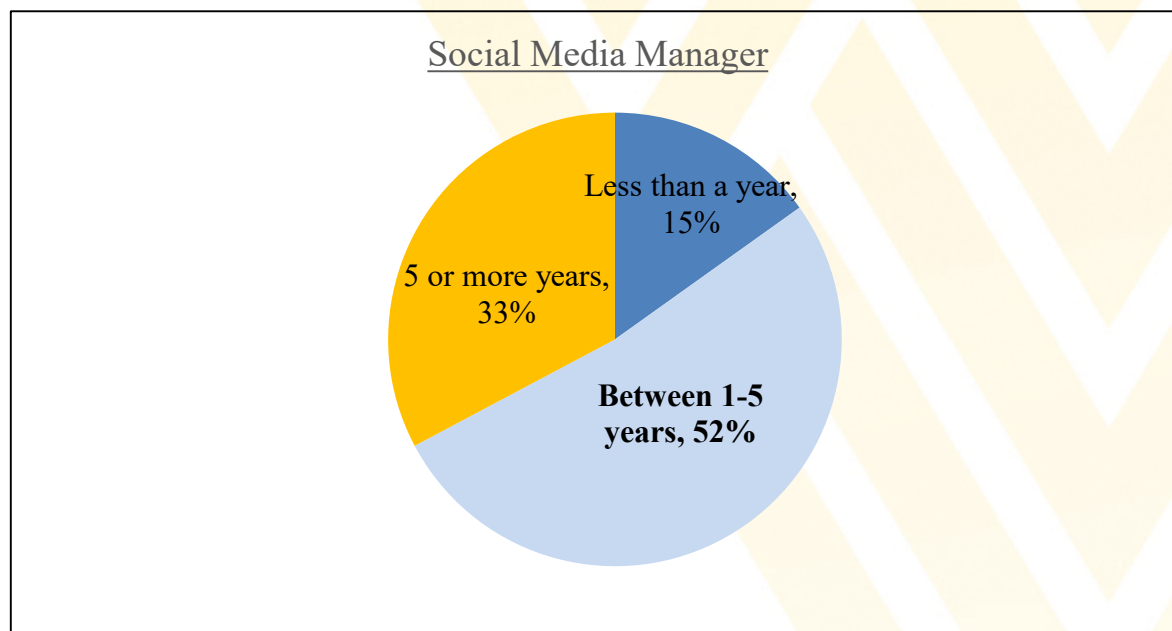


DETAILED FINDINGS



SOCIAL MEDIA JOB IN EDUCATION

Most social media managers (52%) have been responsible for social media at a higher education institution between one and less than five years; one-third (33%) have done it for five or more years. Just 15% of those who responded to the survey have been handling social media in higher education less than a year. About six in 10 (61%) indicated that social media is just one part of their overall job.

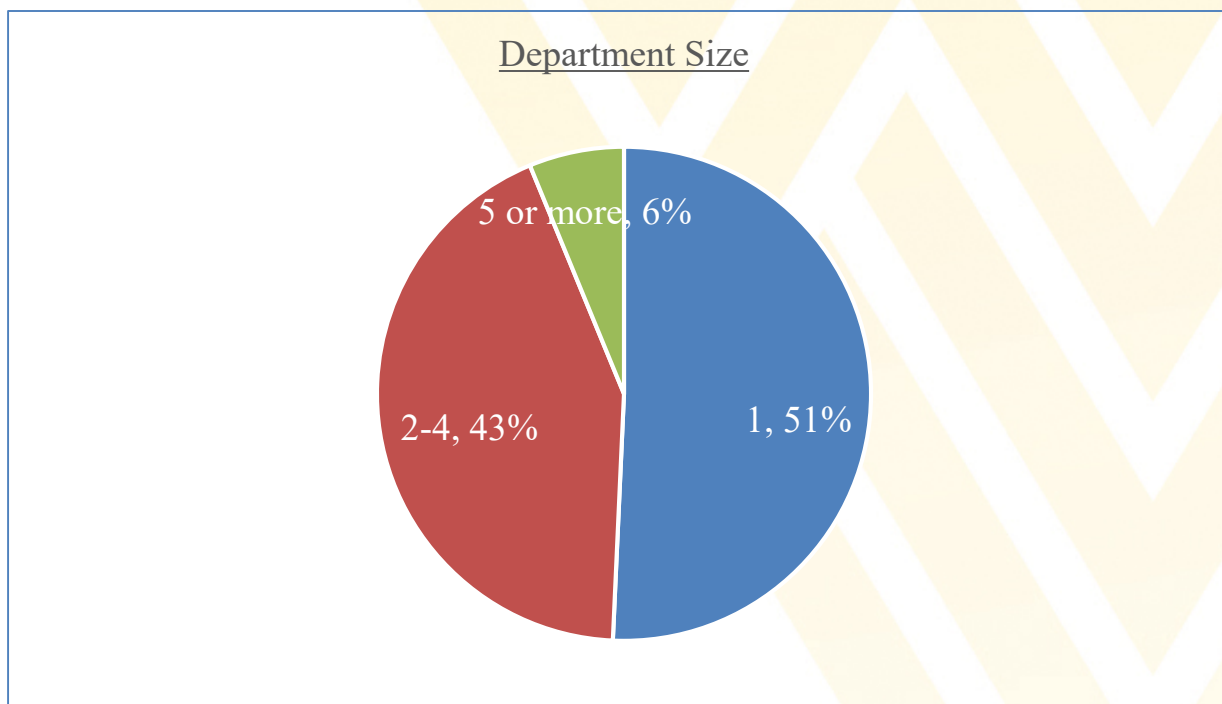


- Social media is my full-time job: 39%
- Social media is part of my overall job: 61%



EMPLOYEES IN DEPARTMENT

Most (51%) are a social media department of one. However, 43% indicated their department is comprised of two to four individuals, and 6% indicated their social media department consists of five or more employees.



Q. How many employees, including yourself, does your social media team consist of?

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RESPONDENTS' TITLES

Survey respondents provided a list of over 100 varying titles, about which only 15 of those titles were mentioned by at least two social media managers. The titles named most often, as well as the number of times they were mentioned, include:

- 12 Social Media Specialist
- 10 Social Media manager
- 7 Social Media Coordinator
- 4 Assistant Director
- 3 Social media strategist
- 2 Assistant Director of Social Media
- 2 Associate Director for Social Media
- 2 Communications manager
- 2 Communications Specialist
- 2 Digital Communications Specialist
- 2 Director
- 2 Enrollment Communication Coordinator
- 2 Marketing Coordinator
- 2 Marketing manager
- 2 Marketing specialist
- 2 Social media director

The complete list of titles can be found in the appendix.



SUPERVISORS' TITLES

The reporting structure of social media managers varies. Respondents provided over 170 titles for their supervisors. The titles named most often, as well as the number of times they were mentioned, include:

11 Director of Marketing	2 Director of Public Relations
10 Director of Communication	2 Director of Web Communications
9 Dean	2 Director of Web Services
6 Director	2 Editorial Director
4 Director of Marketing & Communications	2 Executive Director of Communications
4 Executive Director of Marketing and Communications	2 Executive Director of Media Relations
3 Chief Marketing Officer	2 Marketing Director
3 Executive Director	2 Vice President
3 Marketing Manager	2 VP of Communications
3 Senior Director of Marketing	
2 Chief Communications Officer	
2 Chief Marketing and Communications Officer	
2 Communications Manager	
2 Director of Brand Strategy	
2 Director of Digital Strategy	

The complete list of titles can be found in the appendix.



ALL RESPONSIBILITIES

At least nine in 10 social media managers are responsible for social listening and/or engagement (96%), posting content to popular social media channels (96%), gathering and analyzing data (90%) and developing goals and strategies for social media on campus (90%).

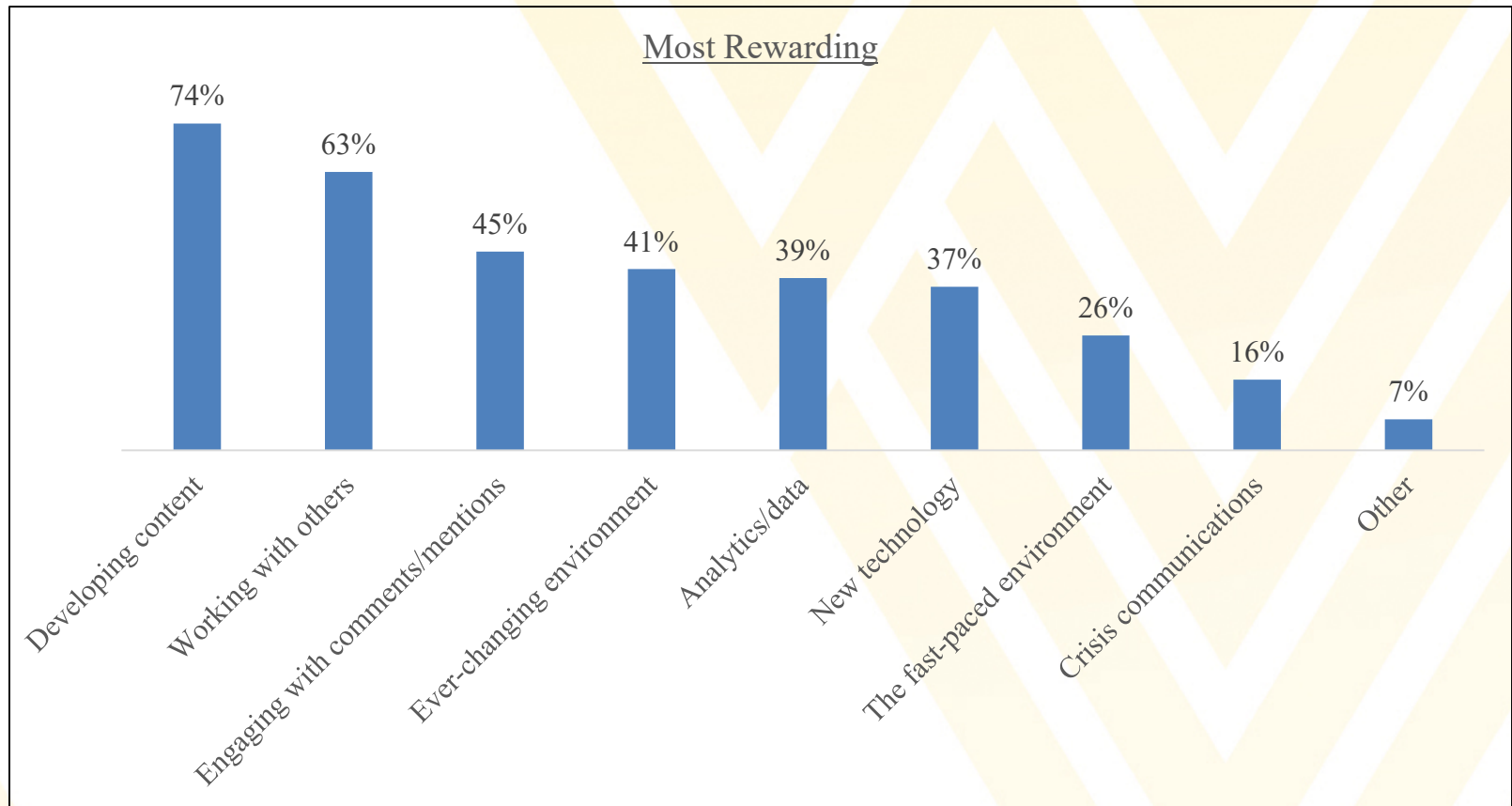


Q. Which of the following are you, personally, responsible for? (check all that apply)

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BRINGS THE MOST JOY

Developing content (74%), working with others (63%) engaging with comments/mentions (45%) and having an ever-changing environment (41%) are those parts of the job social media managers enjoy most.

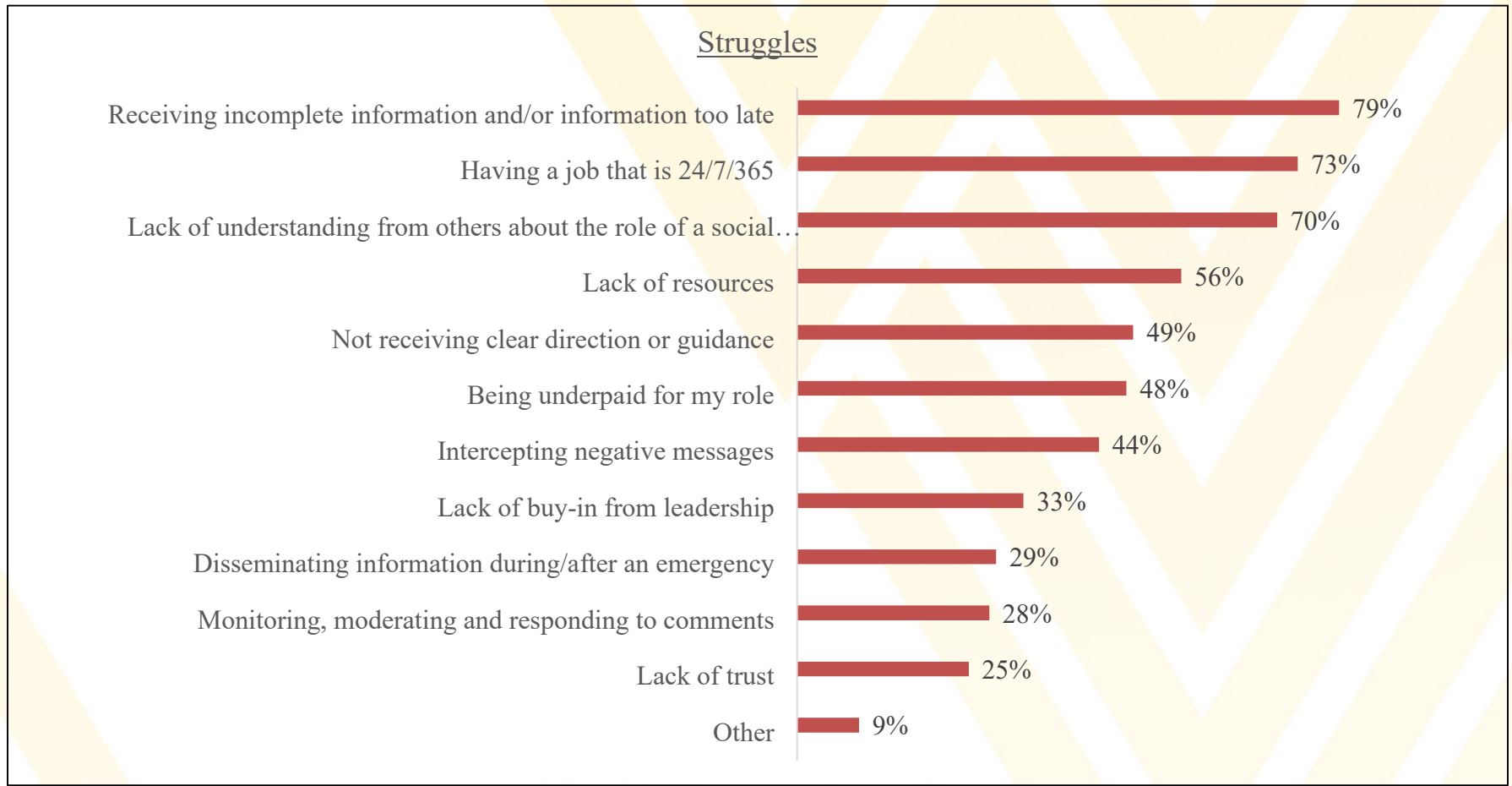


Q. What gives you the most joy when it comes to your job? (check all that apply)

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GREATEST STRUGGLES

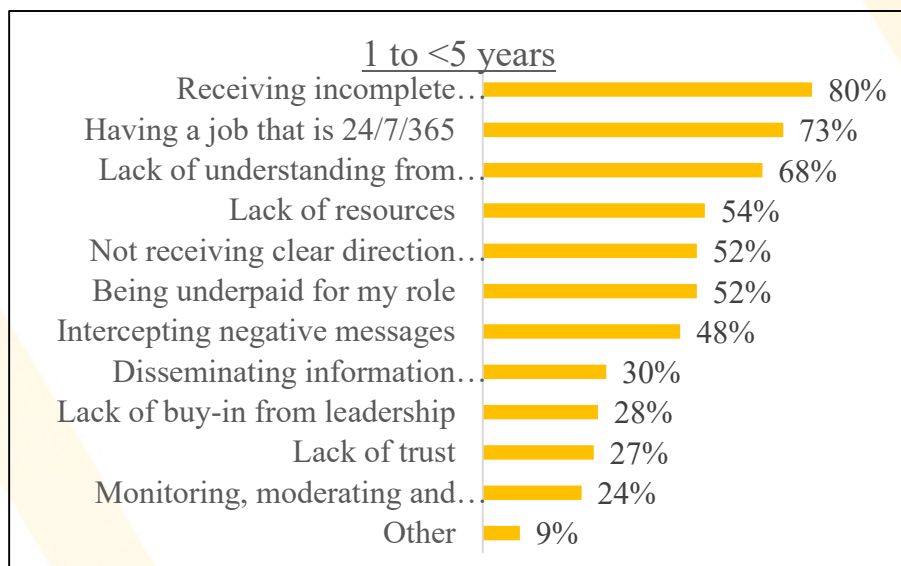
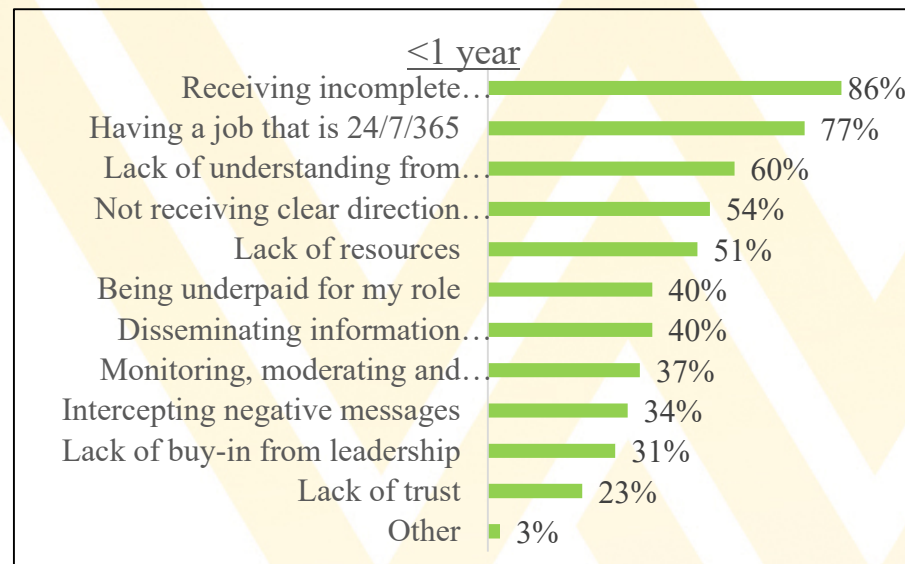
Their greatest struggles social media managers have are receiving incomplete or late information (79%), having a 24/7/365 job (73%) and a lack of understanding from others about the role of social media manager (70%)



Q. What would you say are your greatest struggles as a social media manager? (check all that apply)

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GREATEST STRUGGLES



Q. What would you say are your greatest struggles as a social media manager? (check all that apply)

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GREATEST STRUGGLES

<i>Amount of information coming in; too many urgent requests (2 mentions)</i>
<i>Engaging audiences beyond being content lurkers</i>
<i>Having to push content that doesn't serve our audience(s)</i>
<i>At 38, I am treated like a kid by those who have absolutely no idea what I do, regardless of how many times my managers have tried to explain it to them (although they don't really understand the intricacies of social media, either).</i>
<i>Lack of integration to "the process" -- the understanding that you don't plan everything and then "ask social media to do something," it should be a part of your overall strategy.</i>
<i>Lack of time to accomplish tasks. (2)</i>
<i>Micromanagement</i>
<i>No regular communication from central comm office</i>
<i>Not being able to post in the moment because everything I share must be edited and approved</i>
<i>Not being at the table when decisions are being made</i>
<i>Pressure from leadership to deploy tactics that go against best practices/strategy</i>
<i>Pressure to be uber-creative every single day..all day..</i>
<i>Shared governance without good partners</i>
<i>The emotional wear of being on social media</i>
<i>The fact that I am also the LONE news content creator, so figuring out how to split my time, especially in a crisis, is hard.</i>
<i>The fact that it's really not my job but is under the "other duties as assigned," but is a large portion of what I do.</i>
<i>The mess that is inactive and dead accounts.</i>
<i>The mindset from others (especially leadership) that we can "just throw X up on social" when there's no better place to promote something, or the thought that putting something on social is quick and easy</i>

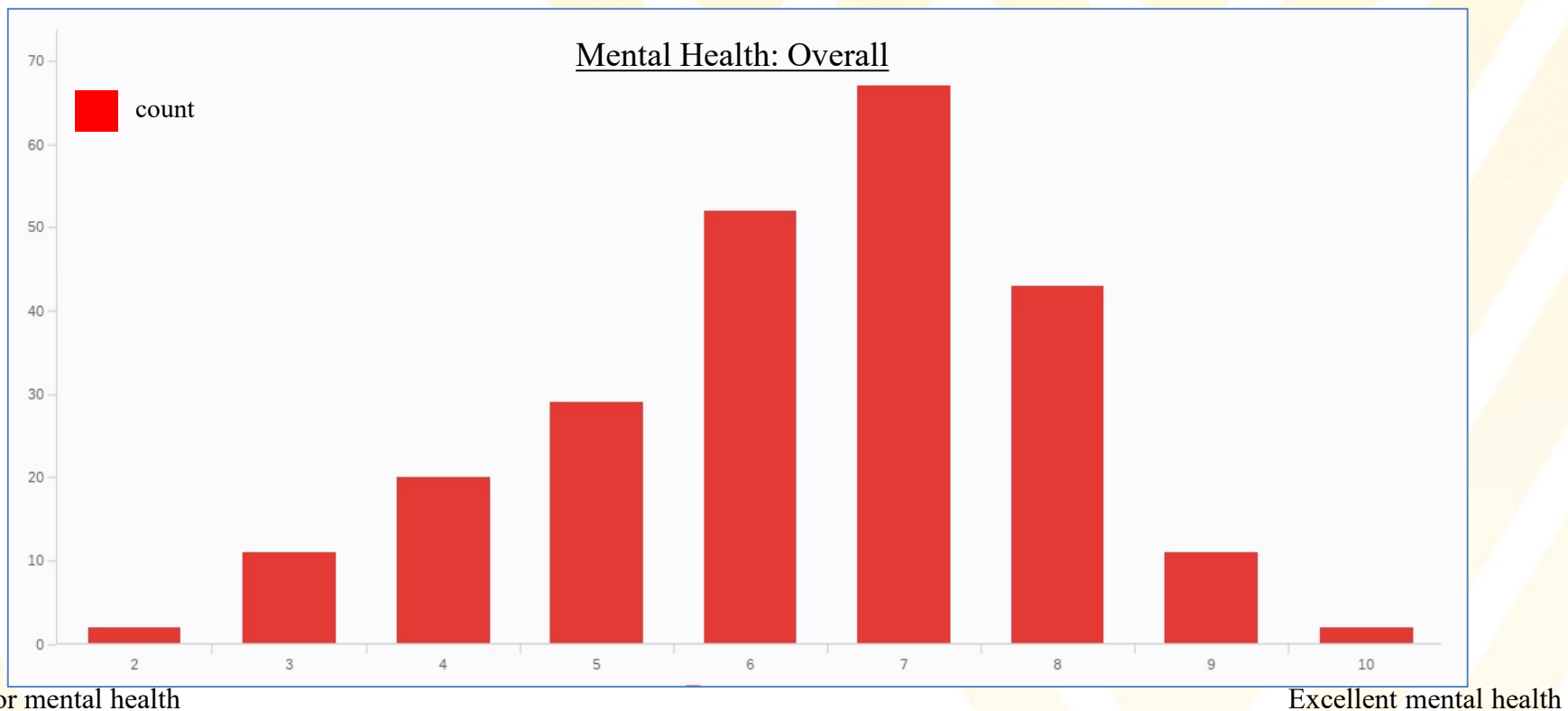


Q. What would you say are your greatest struggles as a social media manager? (check all that apply)

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OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH IN JOB

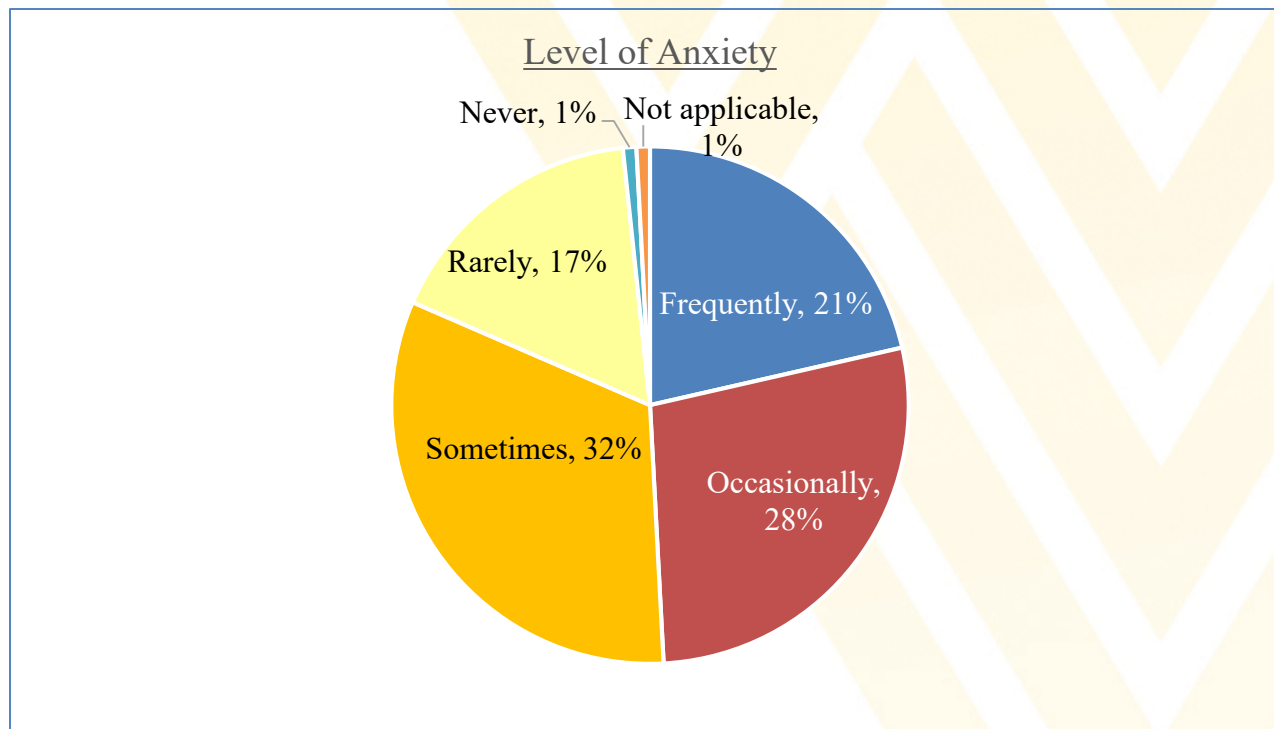
When asked to use a 0-10 scale to rate their overall mental health on a typical day, social media managers' mean response was 6.35.



Q.This question relates to your social media responsibilities. Thinking about your overall mental health, how would you rate it on a typical day? Please use the scale below where "0"=poor mental health and "10"=excellent mental health.

REACTIONS TO NEGATIVE COMMENTS

About two in 10 social media managers (21%) are frequently upset or anxious after reading negative comments on a topic, and nearly three in 10 (28%) are occasionally bothered by them. Most (32%) are affected by negative posts at times and 18% are rarely or never mentally impacted by these types of posts.

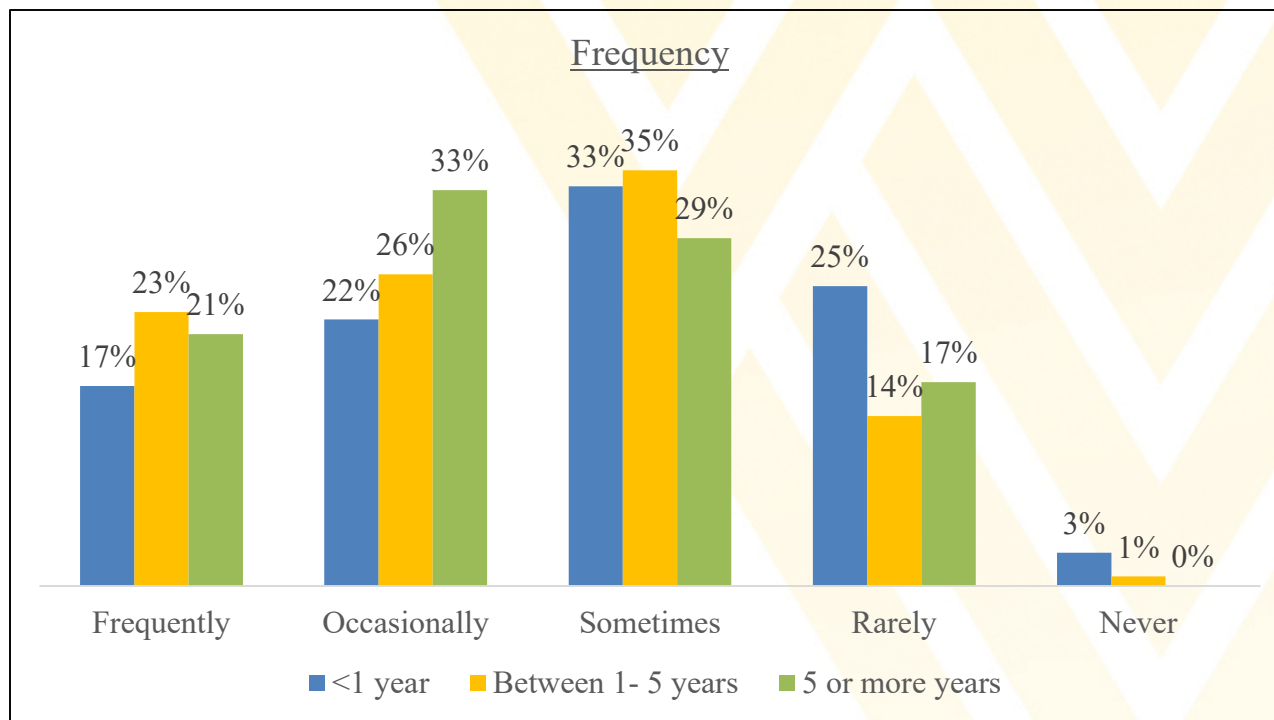


Q. On any given day, social media managers may receive negative comments and reactions. How often have negative comments on a topic made you feel upset or anxious?

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REACTIONS TO NEGATIVE COMMENTS

About four in 10 (39%) of those who have been handling social media for less than a year are frequently or occasionally upset or anxious after reading negative posts. This is true of 49% and 54% who have been in the industry between one and less than five years and five or more years, respectively.

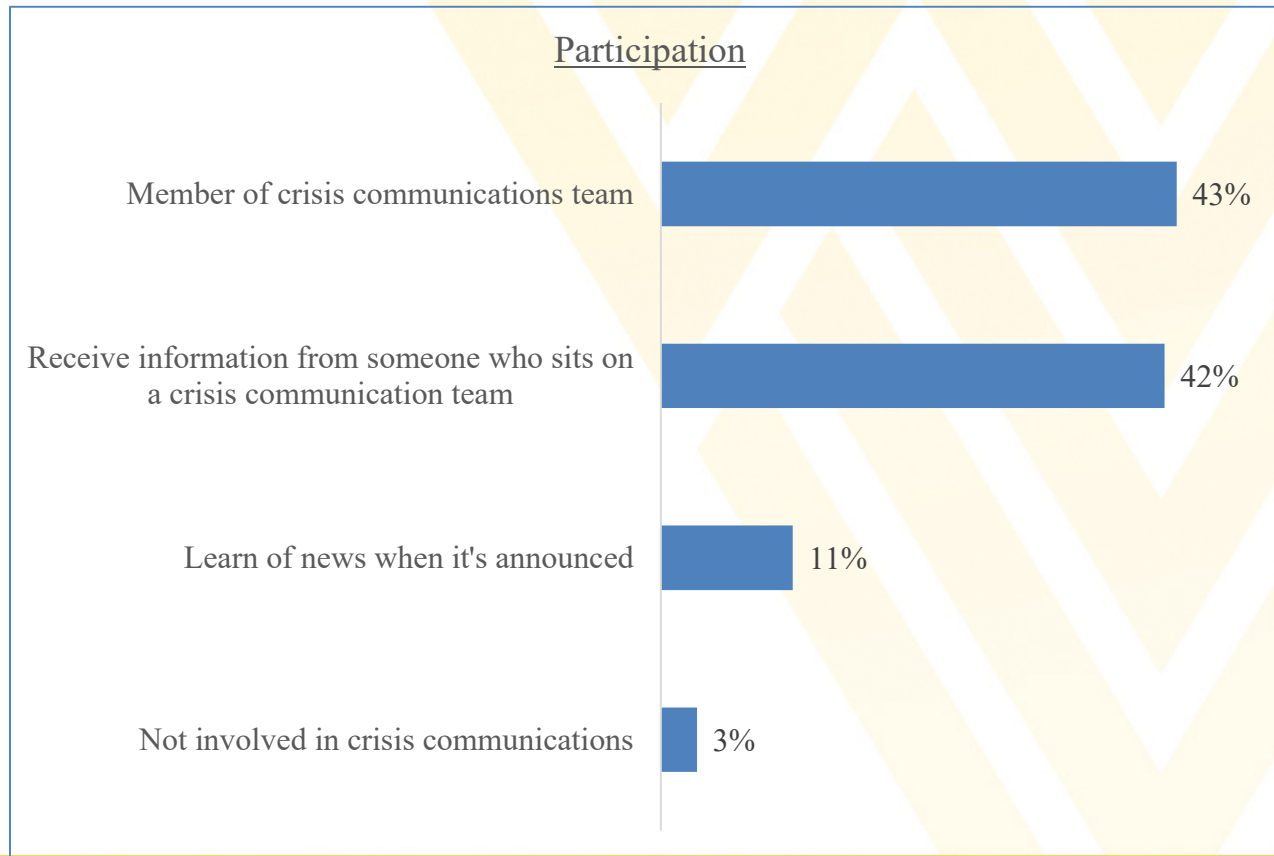


Q. On any given day, social media managers may receive negative comments and reactions. How often have negative comments on a topic made you feel upset or anxious?

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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Last than half (43%) are a member of the crisis communications team, and 42% receive information from someone on the team. About one in 10 (11%) learn about the news when it's announced. Only 3% are not involved in crisis communications.

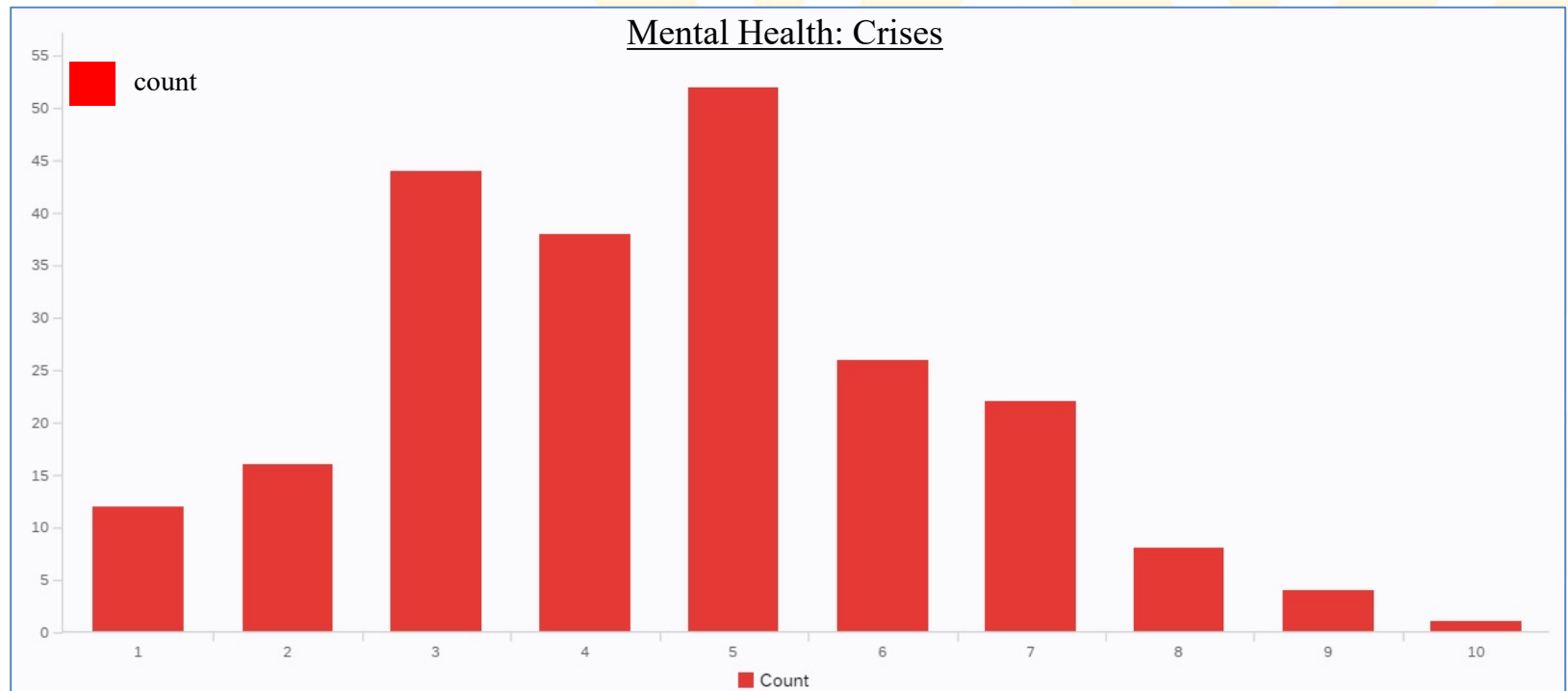


Q. What role do you play in crisis communications?

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MENTAL HEALTH IN CRISES

When asked to use a 0-10 scale to rate their overall mental health during crisis situations at their school, social media managers' mean response was 4.52.



Poor mental health

Excellent mental health

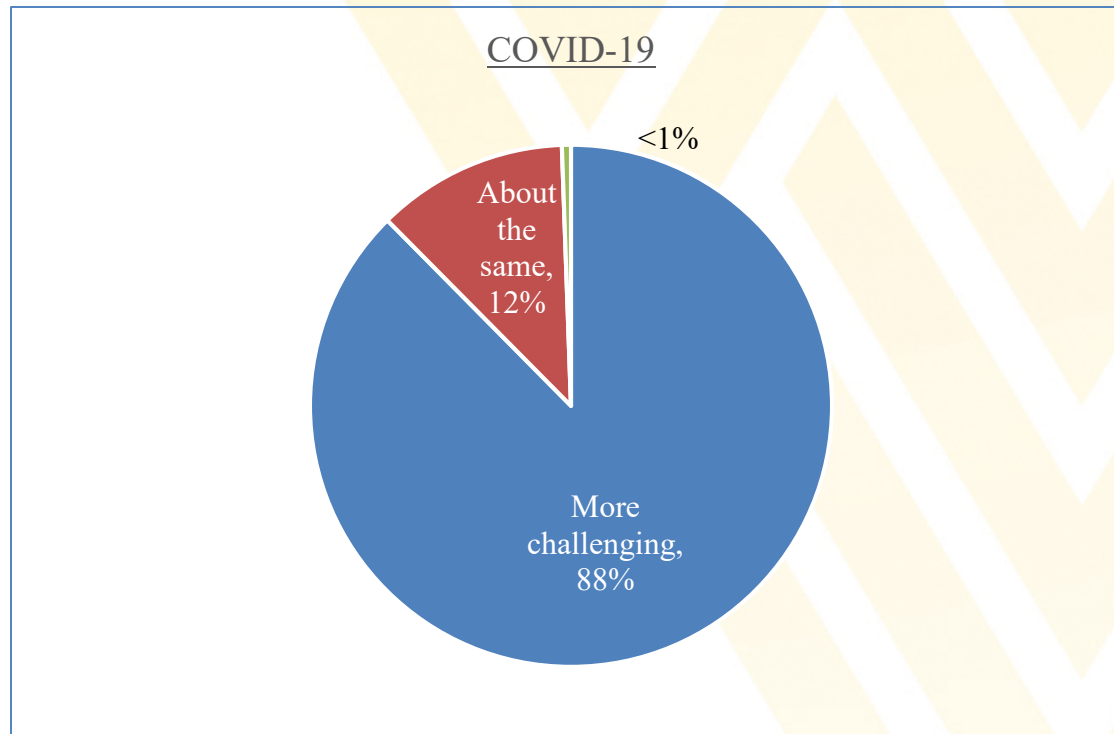


Q. Overall, how would you rate your mental health when handling social media during crisis situations at your college/university? Again, "0"=poor mental health and "10"=excellent mental health.

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IMPACT OF COVID-19

Nearly nine in 10 (88%) social media managers have found handling social media during COVID-19 has made their job more challenging.



Q. Has dealing with the social media aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic at your college/university made your job more or less challenging?

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REASONS JOB IS MORE CHALLENGING

More work required/lack of work /life balance (27)

“In my team of 25 (Advancement) I am the one person who handles emails, web, and social, so a great amount of responsibility is falling to me right now. I'm WFH much greater than full time, while trying to care for my 3.5 year old daughter. There is no balance and no understanding.”

“Have to be prepared at any time of day to push out content. Content is stressful and often times vague. Answering comments from students and parents when there are no answers established.

Issues with Leadership (20)

Because a university's response to this pandemic is critical in determining how it comes out of the other side of this crisis, and people will be looking to what messaging a university is putting out on social media to judge that response. I only have an hour or so a day to plan, write captions and post to social media because I am given different various tasks throughout the day. But I'm still expected to be putting out GOOD content non stop while dealing with 100000 other things. It's not a focused effort on top of the pressure of messaging in the midst of COVID-19.”

“Senior leadership does not understand the nuances of social media and the strategy behind it. They will create vague messages and don't listen to suggested changes from the social media person. Also, request certain things be posted to social media that are not necessary.

No clear strategy/mix of posts (24)

“I'm the only one who runs our accounts, and I have had conflicting messages from leadership and campus partners about what to share via social (i.e. business as normal with some COVID messaging OR COVID 24/7 and nothing else).”

“Primarily the timing of COVID impacted admission/enrollment strategies during a critical time of yield. So, while communicating important campus news, we were also asked to inspire benefactors to give and prospective students to apply. So many messages all at the same time.”



Q. Can you please explain why handling the social media aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic has made your job more challenging?

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REASONS JOB IS MORE CHALLENGING

Being asked to post a lot of information quickly (16)

‘Although things are finally starting to settle, it was chaotic when everything first hit. All content had to be put on hold. Strategy had to be completely re-evaluated. I felt like I was making big announcements 24/7, often with not enough time to prepare before it needed to go out.’

Having to read more negative posts/negative sentiments (15)

‘It feels like we are constantly rolling out bad news. And with bad news comes the need to monitor and prep for dissatisfied customers. Social feels the brunt of that.’

Need entirely new content (12)

‘We are in crisis communication mode 24/7 now, which means that everything that comes out from our social channels weighs 10x more than it normally does. Determining appropriate messaging with appropriate timing can be challenging - this is a new kind of content.’

Highly scrutinized (10)

First, the pandemic started during our decision launch - a time when usually we need to be extremely active on social media, but as announcements and reports came out from the college, all of my content had to be vetted through the crisis committee, and I was, in the end, able to post very little at all, all while feeling pressure from my office to keep posting.

As we switched gears into virtual yield, that pressure from my office continued to build, and I now receive all sorts of advice/ideas from my office about what to post, and when/how often. We are doing more than ever and I get the feeling some still don't feel that is enough.’

‘We are in crisis communication mode 24/7 now, which means that everything that comes out from our social channels weighs 10x more than it normally does. Determining appropriate messaging with appropriate timing can be challenging - this is a new kind of content.’



Q. Can you please explain why handling the social media aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic has made your job more challenging?

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REASONS JOB IS MORE CHALLENGING

Unable to provide quick answers (10)

“I’m often intercepting questions on social media that rightfully deserve responses, but by the time I’m able to get the answers I need from our crisis team an embarrassingly long time has usually passed. Cue stress and guilt.”

“Since other universities began to close, there has been a constant stream of comments and direct messages both telling us we're irresponsible for not closing sooner and telling us we're irresponsible for closing at all. The communications were largely handled by a small team of VPs and passed down without room for edit and without most basic questions answered so when messages were posted (i.e., campus is closing), there were hundreds of questions we could not answer. As decisions were made by leadership (i.e., paying student workers, implementing pass/fail), communications were released to students before the social team was aware so we were answering questions with outdated information, causing others (advisors, parents, etc.) to have to correct us on the primary channels. Our content calendar was put on hold so only essential updates were posted, and all posts are still (in mid-April) having to get the "okay" from our VP. This has caused a massive bottleneck in getting content approved, meaning our accounts have gone completely dark for days at a time... It's even more challenging to keep the boundaries between work and home because we are always home, so there's an expectation of being on-call 24/7 (which was the case before, but now there seem to be far more after-hours conversations than previously, when after-hours conversations were reserved for true timely incidents). Our team is also exhausted and scared for our health, so the added pressure of managing all this while handling our own personal anxieties has made things more difficult. The fact that there is no true end date has increased the anxiety as well”.

Other miscellaneous responses

- Fewer resources
- Not considered part of the key team
- Too many approvals needed
- Receive conflicting information
- Duplicate content posted by various colleges, etc.
- Decisions not made uniformly

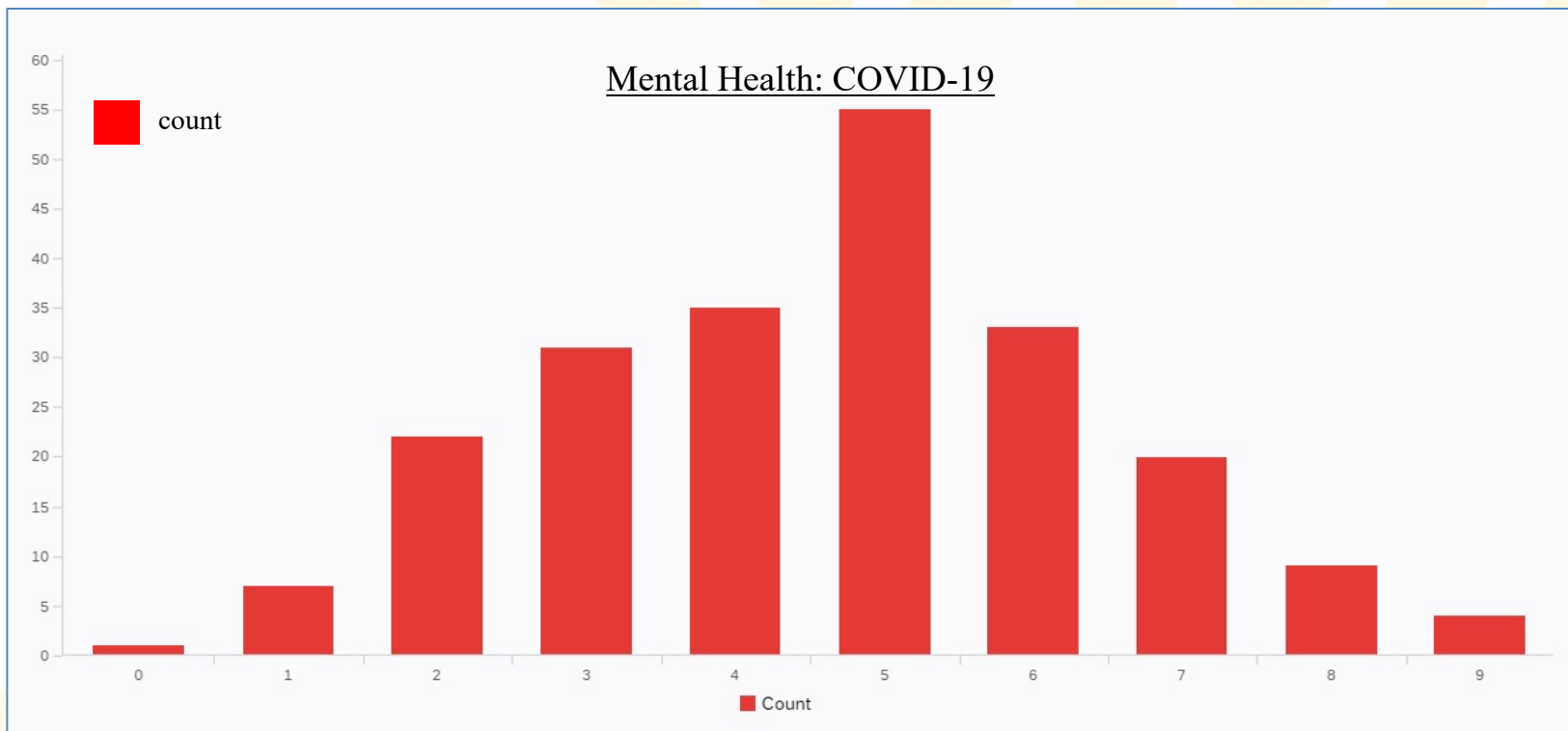


Q. Can you please explain why handling the social media aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic has made your job more challenging?

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MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

When asked to use a 0-10 scale to rate their overall mental health during the COVID-19 crisis, social media managers' mean response was 4.63.



Q. Again, as a social media manager, how would you rate your mental health when dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic at your college/university? Again, "0"=poor mental health and "10"=excellent mental health.

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The word cloud below illustrates the chaotic thoughts and feelings social media managers have expressed while describing their current challenges. It indicates that a great number of them are bothered by having to announce news that negatively impacts students.

- [illegible]

CAUSED ANXIETY DURING PANDEMIC

“The hardest part is seeing students who feel left out, forgotten, depressed, anxious and in a circumstance that the university can't help/won't help with.”

“Sadness when students are not available to get food or resources, when students who really love the University are being challenged by their own circumstances. Anxiety when we are being attacked by extremists who are not rational. The standard rules of engagement have changed.”

“The decision to move our graduation ceremony online was such a heartbreaking disappointment for many and caused the most negative backlash we have received through all of this. I felt so sad for them and took it personally.”

“When I was told I would have to run exact language through the CEO of our Alumni Agencies as well as the Director of Communications for the school itself, in addition to having our COO and editor-in-chief proofread.”

“When everything first started in March, and I was told to pull all and any communications from our social channels and essentially pause all communication for our audiences. I felt it was important to continue communicating with our audiences about COVID and general operations but was still told to pause everything.”

“It's really hard to read the comments during this, more so than other situations in the past. Probably because there's just so much uncertainty and anxiety everywhere you turn, even internally/from leadership when that's typically not the case when dealing with an issue. Fear of lay-offs/furlough means that even when I can normally turn to others at my institution during a 'normal' crisis, I don't feel like I can now because everyone is feeling the stress/panic. It's not just coming from the PR side like it normally works.”

“There is University news that should have been communicated via social media through a campus-wide email. Disagreement with the crisis team on how we should deal with negative comments regarding commencement. Hours spent answering private messages that are often accusatory and negative.”

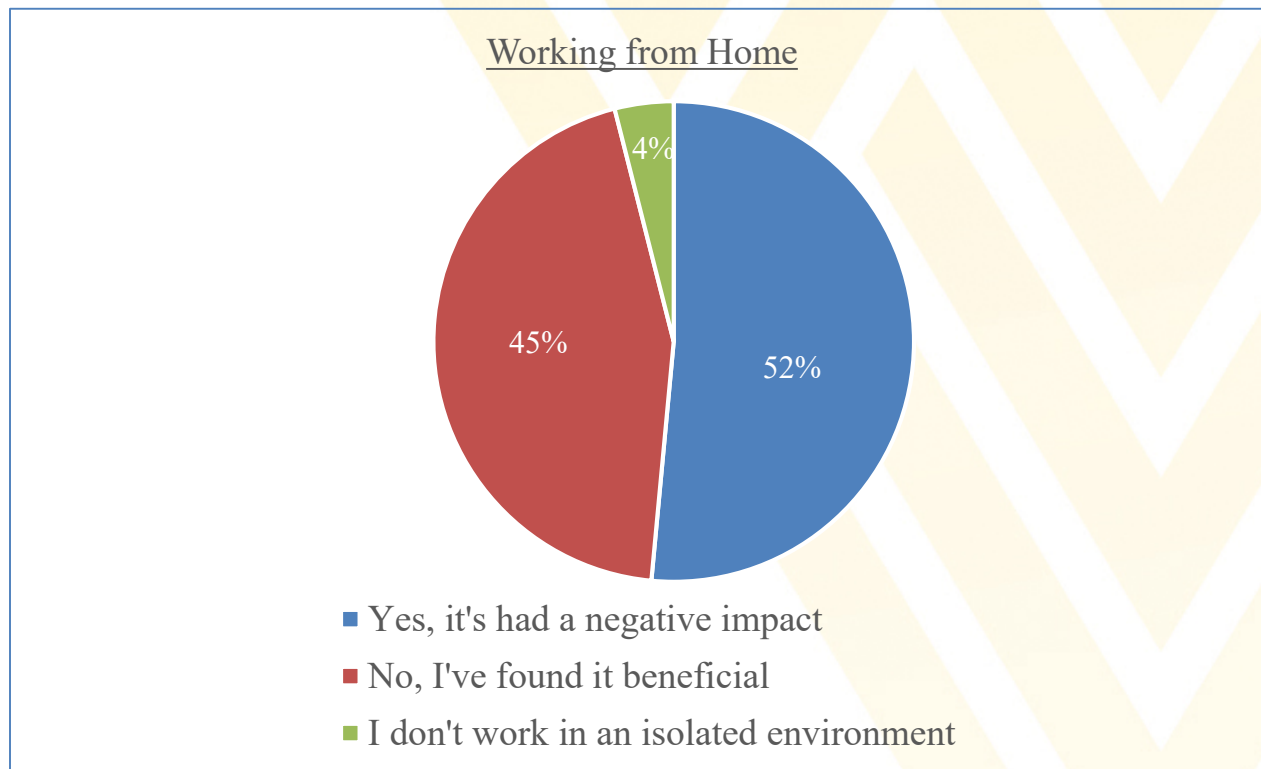


Q. Please tell us about any particular moments handling social media during the pandemic that have caused you to experience anxiety or sadness. If this question is not applicable to you, please type "NA" in the text box.

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IMPACT OF WORKING IN ISOLATION

Just over half (52%) said working in an isolated environment has impacted their mental health. Another 45% indicated it's been beneficial for them. The remainder (4%) reported that they don't work in an isolated environment.

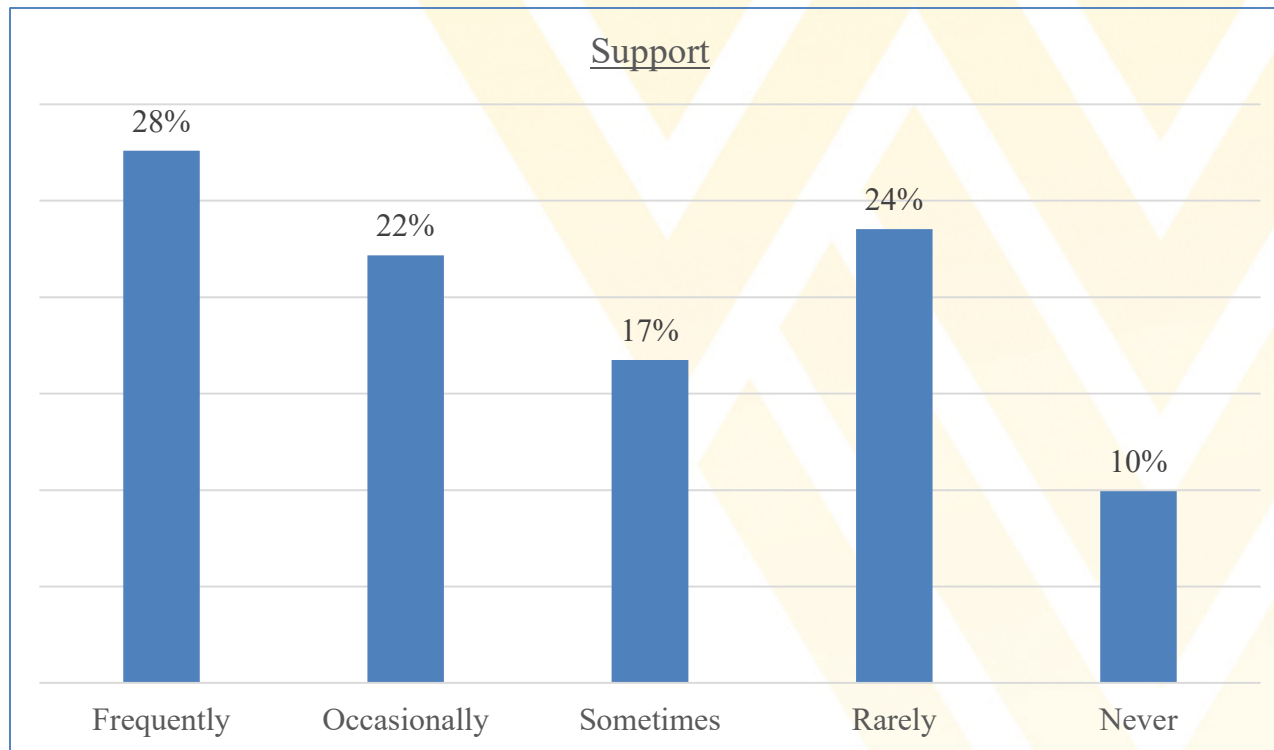


Q. Has having to work in an isolated environment (i.e. from home) impacted your mental health in any way?

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SUPERVISOR CHECK -IN

Social media managers indicated that their supervisor frequently (28%) or occasionally (22%) asks them how they are feeling. Nearly two in ten (17%) said this is sometimes true, and 34% said it's rarely or never the case.



Q. Now we'd like to understand how much support, if any, social media managers receive. How often does your manager ask you how you are feeling?

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SUPERVISOR CHECK -IN

Nearly three in ten (28%) of those social media managers with less than a year's experience reported that their supervisor rarely or never asks them how they are feeling vs. just 15% of those who have been in the industry one to less than five years and 17% of those with five or more years of experience.

	<1 year	1 to <5 years	5 or more years
Frequently	16%	23%	21%
Occasionally	22%	26%	33%
Sometimes	33%	35%	29%
Rarely	25%	14%	17%
Never	3%	1%	-
NA	-	2%	-

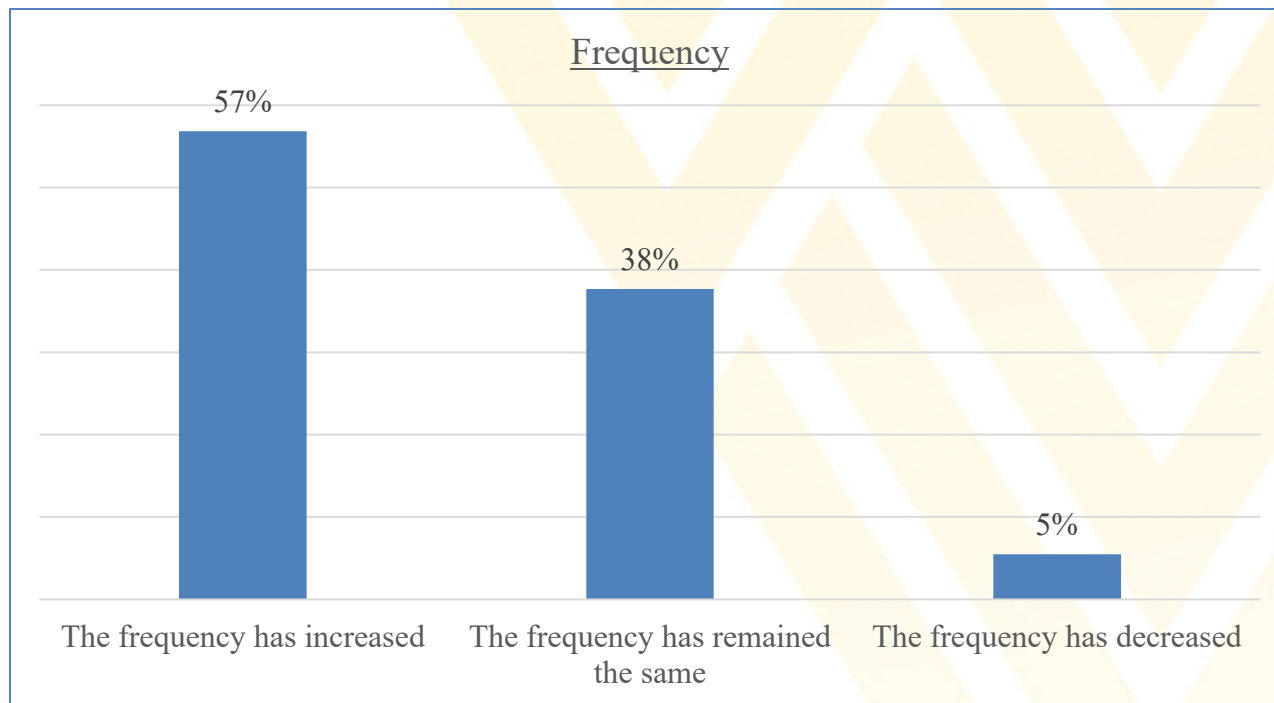


Q. Now we'd like to understand how much support, if any, social media managers receive. How often does your manager ask you how you are feeling?

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FREQUENCY OF CHECK -INS

Nearly six in 10 (57%) said their supervisor has checked on their mental health more during the pandemic. Nearly four in 10 said the frequency of mental health check-ins have remained the same. Just a small percentage (5%) said the check-ins have decreased.

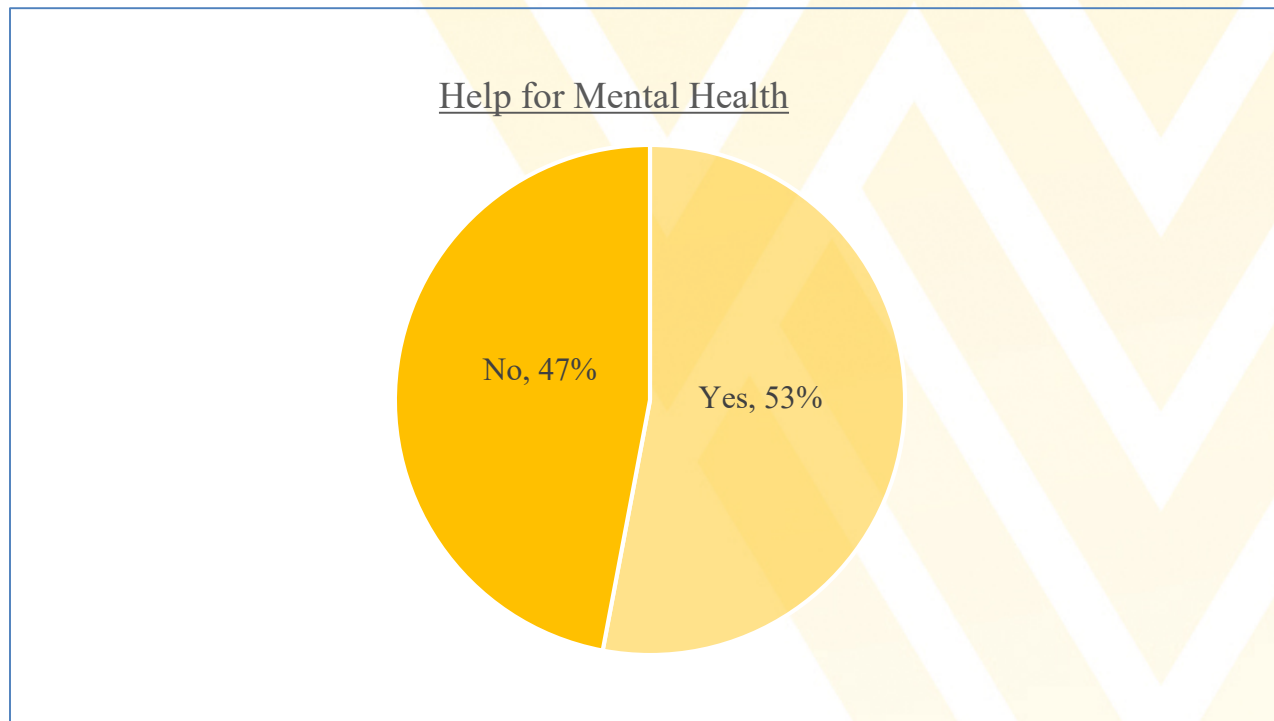


Q. How has the frequency at which your manager checks on your mental health changed, if any, during the pandemic?

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SUPPORT AND/OR RESOURCES

Just over half said their supervisor provides them with the support and/or resources needed to ensure their good mental health.



Q. Does your manager provide you with the support and/or resources you need to ensure good mental health?

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SUGGESTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

Ways in which social media managers say their supervisors can help them alleviate stress/anxiety include:

- Don't rely on social media managers to work 24/7/365 (36 mentions)

"It would be helpful if someone took over monitoring the accounts for just one night or a weekend. Just some totally off hours would be really nice."

- Be supportive/better understand social media manager's responsibilities (19 mentions)

"Be supportive, offer to help, check in, don't ignore emails, allow me to hire full-time help or at least promote social media students to assist more. Not assume that my one area is fine and taken care of so that they can focus on other things."

"I am incredibly lucky that my manager has my back. However, they don't know as much as I do about social media. That's why I was hired. It also makes it tricky to explain/stand up for someone whose role you don't understand completely."

- Less micromanagement/show trust/include (11 mentions)

"Being able to support me by taking things off of my plate, allowing me to delegate more, having more autonomy over what I do, given me better access to other resources around campus, etc. I think the biggest hurdle is that right now social media is at the core of EVERYTHING but we continue to be left out of many important conversations and are not being provided what we need."



SUGGESTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

Looking at the ways in which social media managers who are specifically responsible for developing goals and strategies for social media on campus – seemingly a more senior responsibility – suggest supervisors can be more supportive, three primary ideas emerge:

- Provide support so social media managers can take needed breaks (37 mentions)
- Do regular “check ins” (16 mentions)
- Improve communication (15 mentions)

Other multiple mentions include:

- Better understand their role/be an advocate (8 mentions)/Trust their work/judgement (7 mentions)/Miscellaneous (10 mentions)

“It would be helpful if I was able to not be on call 24/7 - even taking a weekend off where someone could cover breaking information or respond to comments would be helpful.

However, we are short-staffed and I'm the only person who does social media on my team. If I asked for that help, it likely wouldn't get done and I'd have more work to come back to - so I'd rather just keep up with it.”

“It's hard feeling like “the only one” who can do what you do, often the support I need really is just having someone else monitor social media and offer suggestions on how to respond to the questions. Sometimes, when I'm mentally exhausted, my supervisor helps write messages that I can just post, and I find that extremely helpful.”

Noticing when we're in the thick of things or whenever a crisis is occurring to check in and see how things are going, if I need a break, or to just talk about what's going on and how it's affected me.”

“Be supportive, offer to help, check in, don't ignore emails, allow me to hire full-time help or at least promote social media students to assist more. Not assume that my one area is fine and taken care of so that they can focus on other things.”

“Give me more (and timely) information about what's going on so that I can be proactive in my messaging and not be blindsided or unprepared.”

“Assist in trying to connect me better with the communications department. Help to show that University leadership actually cares about what we're doing.”



Q. As a social media manager, what could your manager do better to help you manage stress/anxiety while managing social media accounts?

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EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISORS

“My manager rocks. She's made more people available to help me so that I don't have to do all the monitoring alone anymore. She made daily check-ins and lets me vent, but also helps me think through solutions or next steps if there are any. She tries to hide it, but I can tell that she's getting progressively more stressed, and so I'm starting to feel like supporting me is increasing her work/stress load and then I feel bad for needing support. So, support is cascading need at all levels.”

“I am actually very lucky to have such a great supervisor. He checks in with me frequently to see if anything (work-related or otherwise) is giving me stress and if there is anything he can do to make something easier for me.”

“My supervisor understands the issues that social media managers face in terms of mental health and negative messages, etc. He frequently forces me to take breaks (which I try to ignore) and takes on some of the monitoring himself. He's also fighting for another full time employee to help. There's honestly not much he could do better.”

“I think for the most part my supervisor has done well to keep us informed without being bogged down with meetings so that there is enough time in the day to separate our time working at home from our time simply being home.”



ADVICE FOR SELF-CARE

- Take a break/set boundaries (60 mentions)

“Find out how you can do a good job and meet the goals your boss needs you to meet during this time. Then use the time outside of that time to do things you love, PUT DOWN THE DAMN CELL PHONE, and go outside to absorb that sweet vitamin D. Tell people who care about you how you're feeling and ask them to check in on you. Practice thankfulness.”

“Unplugging, if you can, is probably the best thing you can do for yourself. Removing Teams off my phone has been great - I used to cringe every time I heard that notification go off during my "home" time. And make it clear to your manager that you do need "home" time. Social media doesn't sleep, but we humans need to if we're going to bring our best selves to work each day.”

“Set/communicate boundaries and schedule out time to do something that will benefit your mental health. Also, remember that you're human. The words you are reading are not personal, but it's also okay to feel whatever you're feeling. Give yourself the opportunity to process those emotions in whatever way works for you.”

- Communicate

“Talk to your manager, especially right now. Be open. If you haven't lost your job yet, you probably won't for a while, and you have absolutely nothing to lose. They need you right now. Everyone is more stressed, and this comes across in different ways. Some folks are being super micromanaging. Others are popping in new ideas that come to them, trying to help. They may not understand that we're tapped out as it is, and additional tasks to "think about" are enough to push us over the edge. So tell them.”

“Talk to each other - in your department, outside your department, never let the distance make you feel like you have to work in a silo.”

“Take advantage of mental health/Employee Assistance Plan which you should have covered by your employer. I have sought regular therapy since this crisis began, and although I started the therapy for other reasons, it became apparent to my therapist almost immediately just how stressed and anxious my job makes me. I honestly do not plan to do this much longer.”



ADVICE FOR SELF-CARE

- Find allies/ don't go it alone

"You need a support network - of peers at your institution, or at other schools, that you can rely on to reach out to talk and share experiences. You don't have to go it alone, and you can't do and be everything for all parties. Get buy in in what is most important, and put the other items into a hold pattern."

"I also find online groups such as HigherEd Social really helpful because you see that everyone is going through the same thing, and there are excellent resources and support. Some of the U.S. schools were ahead of us in terms of COVID-19 communications and closures, so it was helpful to know what to expect."

"Talk to other social media managers and communications colleagues. We have a roundtable twice a week where we can talk about challenges, ask questions and get support,. It's been really helpful, even it is virtual. Kids and pets make welcome interruptions too."

- Find an outlet (mentions)

"Even if it's some work, find creative projects that are personally rewarding or fulfilling. I put together video messages from faculty to students on Instagram. It was a ton of work, but the response and engagement was huge, the faculty and Dean loved it, and it raised my professional profile in the school."

"Find an outlet, whether is it working out or a hobby. Find a way to relieve some stress and separate yourself from work when possible."

"...Find things you can do that don't include screens - read a book, do yoga, paint, go for a walk."

"Put it away. Put down the phone, close the computer, and focus on something else that brings you joy or challenges you in a manner that has nothing to do with work."



ADVICE FOR SELF-CARE

- Don't take negative posts personally (17 mentions)

"I've always struggled with the advice to 'not take it personally.' I feel like that thinking opens the door to becoming less empathetic to my audience's feelings and needs. Instead, I try to remember that I'm the messenger, I'm human and that's okay."

"Remember that you can only control so much - many times are job is to act as a mouthpiece for others. When they make poor choices, know that the anger being directed at the account is not at you and you did what you could to mitigate it."

"No one tweeting, commenting or messaging your page negative things understands the role of a social media manager. They are rightfully frustrated (most of the time), this is their outlet, don't take it too much to heart."

"Don't take it personally, even though that's absolutely the hardest thing ever, especially when you're an alum who absolutely adores the school. And don't feel like you have to be on 24/7. Those comments and messages can wait until the morning, it's okay."

- Focus on doing the best you can (12 mentions)

"As long as you're doing the best you know that you can do, then you shouldn't worry. I know that's really hard advice to put into practice. Your managers may not always appreciate or support your work, but as long as you know you've done the job at the end of the day – that's what matters."

"I have a saved list of social media posts and accounts that are calming. I also have screenshots of nice things people have said about my work to remind me that my work is seen and valued, even if it doesn't always feel like it."



APPENDIX



RESPONDENTS' TITLES

12 Social Media Specialist
10 Social Media manager
7 Social Media Coordinator
4 Assistant Director
3 Social media strategist
2 Assistant Director of Social Media
2 Associate Director for Social Media
2 Communications manager
2 Communications Specialist
2 Digital Communications Specialist
2 Director
2 Enrollment Communication Coordinator
2 Marketing Coordinator
2 Marketing manager
2 Marketing specialist
2 Social media director

Assistant Director for Digital Marketing
Assistant Director of Digital Communications
Assistant director of social media and communications
Assistant director of Web communications
Assistant Director, Communications & Recruitment
Assistant Web manager
Associate Director for Strategic Communications
AVP
Communication Director
Communications and Marketing Specialist
Communications Coordinator
communications officer
(Student) social media & marketing manager
Communications Specialist for the Office of Student
Success
Communications Strategist - Creative Writer
Content and media officer
Content manager
Content Marketing Coordinator



RESPONDENTS' TITLES

Content Marketing Intern
Content Strategist
Coordinator of Content and Digital Engagement
Coordinator of student activities
Coordinator; Parent and Family Services & Off-Campus
Student Services
Counselor
Creative Content manager
Database Technician II
Digital Communication & Engagement Coordinator
Digital Communications manager
Digital Content Specialist
Digital manager
Digital Marketing and Media Specialist
Digital Marketing manager
Digital Marketing Specialist
Digital Strategist

Director of Communications
Director of Communications and Marketing
Director of Marketing and Communications
Director of Media & Public Relations
Director of Media Relations and Communications
Director of News and Social Media
Director of University Marketing & Communications
Director of University Relations (campus)
Director, Content Strategy
Executive Director
Executive Director of Social Media
Executive Director, Digital Engagement and
Communications, Alumni Engagement
Integrated Marketing Specialist
manager, Digital Marketing & Social Media



Q. What is your title and the title of the individual you report to?

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RESPONDENTS' TITLES

Marketing & Communications manager
Marketing and Social media specialist
Marketing and Web Coordinator
Media Relations and Social Media manager
Media specialist
Online Content Coordinator
Online Marketing Coordinator
PR Coordinator
Program Associate
Public Affairs Communications Specialist
Senior Communications Specialist, Web & Social Media
Senior Content Strategist
Senior Director of Integrated Content
Senior manager
Senior Social Media Editor
Senior Social Media manager
Social Media manager
Social Media & Communications Coordinator
Social Media and Content manager
Social Media and Video Production Specialist
Social media community leader

Social Media Coordinator/Web Editor
Social Media Director
Sr. Social media manager
Staff Assistant, Web and Digital Communications Coordinator
Web Communications manager
Web Content Specialist
Writer, Social Media Specialist



Q. What is your title and the title of the individual you report to?

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

SUPERVISORS' TITLES

Assistant communications director
Assistant Dean for Communications
Assistant Director of Marketing

Assistant Director of Marketing & Communications

Assistant Director of Marketing, Web and Digital Communications

Assistant Director of Media Relations and Communications

Assistant Director of Recruitment and Marketing
Assistant Registrar

Assistant to the President for Executive Communications and Media Relations

Assistant to the President for University Communications

Assistant Vice President for Marketing Communications

Assistant Vice President for Strategic Initiatives for Student Success

Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Communications

Associate Dir for Residence Life

Associate Director

Associate Director Digital Content & Strategy



SUPERVISORS' TITLES

Associate Director for Social Media
Associate Director of Business Operations
Associate Director of Digital & Content Strategy
Associate Director of Digital Engagement
Associate Director of Integrated Marketing
Associate director, digital marketing
Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications
Associate Vice President of Communications
Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications
Associate VP of Communications
Asst Director of Pre-College Programs
Asst. Director of Communications
Asst. Director of Marketing
AVC of Communications and Marketing
AVP
AVP and CIO

AVP C&M
AVP Communications
AVP digital marketing
AVP for university communications / director of digital strategy and development
AVP Marketing and Communication
AVP Marketing and Digital
AVP of M&C
AVP of Marketing and Communications
Brand Manager
Campus President
CCMO
Chief Marketing Executive Officer
Chief New Media Officer
CMO
Comms director
Communications Coordinator



SUPERVISORS' TITLES

Communications Director
Content Manager & Strategist
Creative Manager
Creative Strategy Project Manager
Department Chair
Digital Marketing and Research Manager
Dir., Alumni Communication & Recognition
Director Communications
Director Digital Marketing
Director of Administration
Director of Admissions
Director of Advising
Director of Alumni Communications
Director of Alumni Relations
Director of Communications and External Affairs
Director of Communications and Public Affairs
Director of Content and Copy
Director of Digital Content

Director of Digital Experience
Director of Digital Marketing
Director of Editorial Content & Assistant Director of Communications
Director of Editorial Services
Director of Enrollment Communication
Director of Enrollment Marketing
Director of External Relations
Director of Integrated Communications
Director of International Admissions
Director of IT
Director of Marketing & Branding
Director of news content and editorial projects
Director of Operations and Analytics
Director of Public Affairs
Director of recruitment
Director of social media
Director of Strategic Communications and Community Relations
Director of Strategic Content
Director of technology & distance education
Director of University Marketing
Director, Digital Content & Engagement



SUPERVISORS' TITLES

Director, District & Community Relations
Director, Editorial Content & Strategy
Director, MarComm
Director, Marketing and Communications
Director, Social Media Marketing
Director; Parent and Family Service & Off-Campus Student Services
Duan of student engagement
Executive Advisor, Strategic Communications
Executive Director of Digital Communications
Executive Director of Digital Marketing and Communications
Executive Director of University Communications & Marketing
Executive VP
Head of Corporate Communications
Head of Discovery & User Experience
Interim Associate Director of Auxiliary Marketing
Manager, Communications
Marketing and Communications Manager
Office Manager
Philip Jones
PR and Marketing Manager
President

President/CEO
Professor
Program Director
Program Manager
Public relations manager
Public relations specialist
School Dean
Senior Associate Director of Admissions
Senior Communications Manager
Senior Director of Brand Content
Senior Director of Content
Senior Director of Integrated Communications
Senior Director of Strategic and Digital Communication
Senior Director, Marketing and Communications
Senior manager of content strategy
Social Media and Digital Marketing Leader
Social Media Lead
Sr Associate VP
Sr Director, Communications & Marketing
Student Life Director
SVP



SUPERVISORS' TITLES

University Brand and Strategy Officer
Vice President for External Relations
Vice President for Institutional Advancement
Vice President of Advancement
Vice President of Enrollment Marketing
Vice President of marketing
Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations
Vice President of Student Affairs
Vice President, Alumni Engagement
VP for Communications and Marketing
VP of Communications & Institutional Initiatives
VP of Communications and Marketing
VP of Communications and Public Affairs
VP of Enrollment Management
VP of Marketing and Communications
VP of Marketing Communications
VP of PR/Marketing
VP of University Advancement
VP of University Relations
VP of University Relations and Enrollment Management
Web Communications Director
Web Manager

